

# **REDEVELOPMENT PLAN HISTORIC MILL RIVER**

**Office of Planning and Development  
City of Northampton  
Massachusetts**

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## **Summary of Recent Historic Mill River Corridor Activities (2004-2005)**

- Manhan rail trail New South Street to Earle Street-- going to bid fall 2005
- Bay State Gas completed Phase II and III Environmental Assessment on Round House Manufactured Gas Plant Release
- City completed EPA-funded Phase II Environmental Assessment on entire historic Mill River corridor
- City completed acquisition of a small conservation area creating a buffer to Vets Field
- City completed acquisition of a right-of-way and conservation restriction along a portion of the remaining stream section of the Historic Mill River
- City has advanced discussion and research on possible redevelopment opportunities for the Round House Parking Lot that would preserve and enhance parking and other redevelopment opportunities

## **Summary**

The City of Northampton is seeking the revitalization of the Historic Mill River corridor as a vibrant recreation, residential and commercial corridor and potentially the partial restoration of the Historic Mill River as a flowing stream. The corridor and river flow through downtown Northampton, an already vibrant regional retail, cultural and government center. The restoration project would fulfill a long held dream of citizens and city leaders for an urban greenway, dovetail with an expanding regional bikepath network, and provide new opportunities for economic development at the city core.

This is a long term project projected to take two decades to complete. The first phases are focused on identifying and assessing hazardous waste contamination in the Historic Mill River corridor, assigning responsibility, and eventually undertaking remediation as necessary. The second phase, to extend the existing multi-use trail along the river from Pleasant Street to Earle Street is currently under design, with construction expected to begin in 2005. The third phase, economic and housing development should occur as separate discrete projects over the next twenty years. The final phase, partial restoration of portions of the Historic Mill River is at least a decade out, if design and financial challenges can be resolved.

## **History**

Both as an asset and as an occasional liability, the Mill River is intimately and critically woven into and through Northampton's history from the earliest days.

Historically a source of water power and processing water as well as a cheap and convenient means of waste disposal, it was the one indispensable factor in the

establishment of manufacturing in Northampton, which laid the foundation for the community's economic growth and eventual prosperity.

The Mill River was a modest affair that could nevertheless pack a wallop when it flooded. Its power was catastrophically on display in the Great Flood of 1874, which resulted from the breaching of a dam at Williamsburg. The torrent that ensued took 145 lives, destroyed 15 factories and 100 homes, and wiped off the face of the earth the entire hilltown hamlet of Skinnerville.

The early European settlers of Northampton worked ingeniously to limit the river's potential for harm through various schemes to dike or divert it. These yeomen were mainly worried about preventing the drowning of their low-lying crop lands. The first dike was built in 1699 in the Pynchon Meadows. The so-called Maple Street (now Conz Street) dike was built sometime in the late 1800's and operated by an entity called the Northampton Dike Co. The river was first diverted and re-channeled circa 1710. At approximately the current intersection of Pleasant Street (Route 5) and Conz Street, it was redirected from a westerly direction (around the base of Fort Hill) to a southerly direction, into the Connecticut River.

The Mill River in flood time was especially dangerous when it teamed up with its big brother, the Connecticut, such as occurred disastrously in the back-to-back floods of 1936 and 1938 (the latter exacerbated by a hurricane). Some 2,000 people were evacuated as a result of the '36 flood which turned many city streets into canals and did extensive damage throughout the city center.

It was in response to these events that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1939-40 undertook a major flood control project which included cutting off the flow of Mill River through the downtown.

A dike just downstream from the West Street Bridge at the Smith College power plant (formerly the site of MacAllum's Hosiery) diverted the river from a southeasterly to a westerly direction. The stream was redirected through a newly dug channel to connect at the Old Oxbow with its old bed. It flows southerly through the Pynchon Meadows and empties into the Manhan River.

As part of this same flood control project, across town near the southeasterly meadows, the Army Corps constructed a pump station off Hockanum Road (near where the sewage treatment plant is now) and a 4,800 -foot dike that runs from the south end of Pomeroy Terrace south and then west, crossing Route 5, to Lyman Road.

There were both gains and losses to the city netted from the 1940 Mill River diversion and from the subsequent installation of storm mains and the filling in of roughly two-thirds of the estimated 1.3 miles of discontinued stream bed.

There was the obvious gain of flood control. There also was a net gain of valuable center city land made available for public and commercial development which eventually

included parking lots, a recreational field ( the 7.84-acre Veterans Field on West Street), and some new commercial buildings.

Meanwhile, the one-third of the stream bed that was never filled in has become wild, some of it in a deleterious way. It is impenetrable thicket in some places and in others an unattractive, overgrown, occasionally trash-infested drainage ditch full of stagnant or slow moving water - much of it run-off from city streets, and some of it looking like sewage. In places it stinks and is infested with mosquitoes.

### **The Vision of a Restored Historic Mill River**

**EVOLUTION OF THE VISION:** “The idea of having a park along the river bed is not a new one,” wrote the late local historian Alice Manning in 1977 in one of her many columns on local history which appeared Daily Hampshire Gazette. “Agitation for...a beauty spot along the river to be called ‘Paradise Park’” first began in the 1880’s, she reported, without elaborating.

A half century later in 1934, one Gerald Stanley Lee, “author and lecturer,” advocated for converting the Mill River corridor from Pleasant to West Street from what he called “a sleazy sewer stringing itself shamelessly through the very heart of our fair city” into a trailway to be named “Calvin Coolidge Riverpath Park,” Manning reported.

In more recent years, the importance of the abandoned Mill River corridor as a greenway has been discussed in various city planning projects and documents. Upgrading of the streambed also fits with a variety of the city’s major planning goals including those summarized in Northampton Vision 2020, a visioning document with broad-based community input that outlines a consensus on community goals for the next 20 years, adopted in June, 1999. (See box: Planning history.)

Meanwhile there have been improvements made in the Historic Mill River corridor. Some of these are directly related to an ongoing project to develop a network of bike paths, mostly on old rail way right-of-ways, within the city and the region. (See box: Redevelopment in the Corridor to Date.)

**THE VISION:** The vision for the Historic Mill River that informs this project has at its centerpiece the restoration of a controlled level of flow into the historic channel, thus making the river in its passage through the city center once again a living presence.

It is a millennial vision in the utopian sense of the word. The river which historically served the community as a utility will continue to serve it as an amenity, as an ornament, and as a unifying factor.

There are multiple recreational, aesthetic, cultural and economic benefits to be derived from the realization of this vision:

**Strengthen the core:** The restoration of the Historic Mill River will both practically and psychologically enlarge the geographical boundary of the city's already vibrant central business district. As planning documents for a quarter century have pointed out: the stronger the core the stronger the city.

**A unifying factor:** The restoration would provide an attractive amenity that encourages walking within and around the center of the city and walking - and biking- from contingent residential neighborhoods into and out of the center, thus helping to "unify" the city, in the words of the city planner.

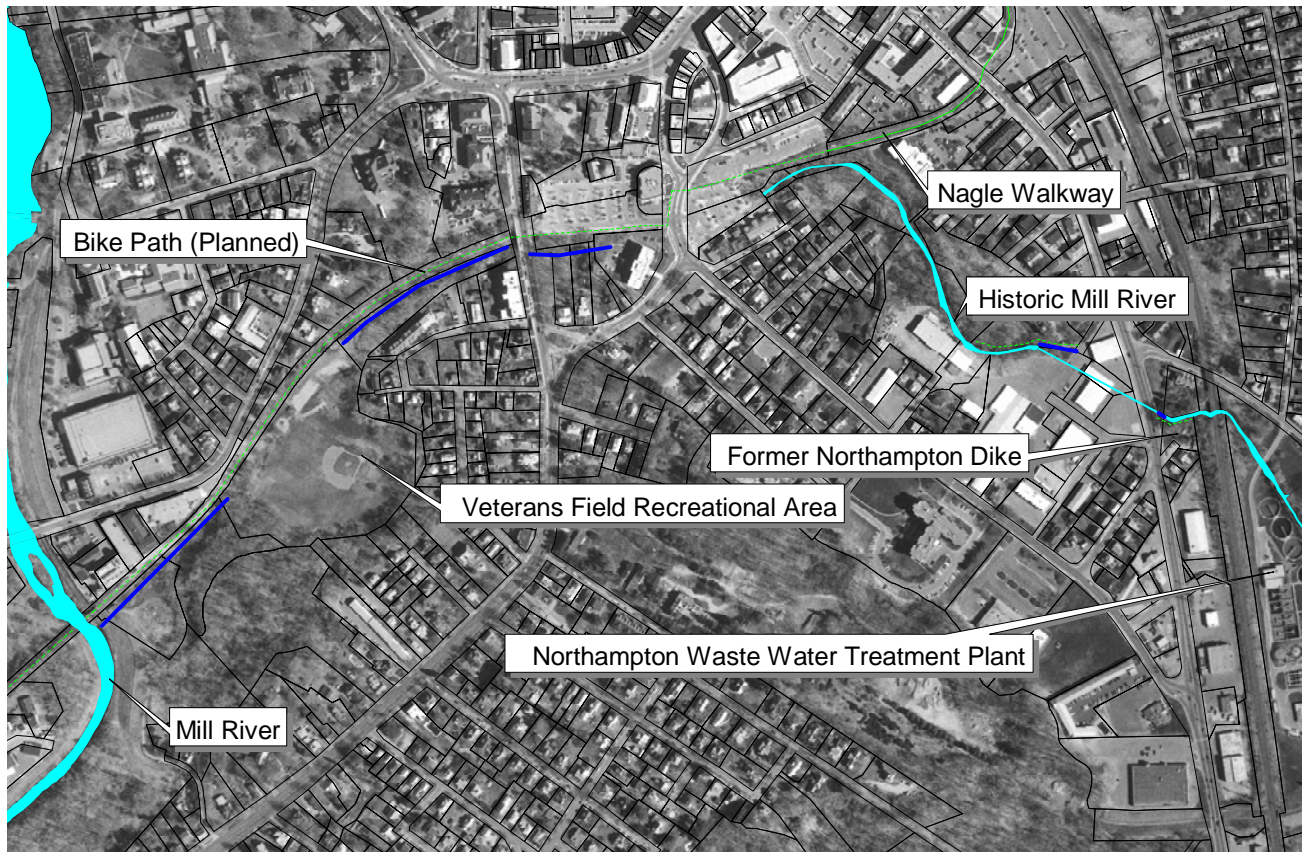
**Recreation and alternative transportation:** A river running beside bike path(s) will only encourage more use of these paths not only for recreation but also as an alternative means of transportation. It is expected, for instance, that people who eventually live and/or work in the Village at Hospital Hill - a mixed use neighborhood being planned for 125 acres at the former Northampton State Hospital on Route 66 (West Street) - or those wishing to visit or shop at the new Village will be encouraged to use the bike path in the old river/railroad corridor to commute to and from downtown.

**Cultural enrichment:** This project also promises a cultural benefit through a renewed public appreciation of the city's industrial legacy. The assessment of the Brownfield sites will, in addition to providing information pertinent to environmental and health concerns, cast new light upon the industrial and commercial history of the riverway. The process of unearthing and presenting some of this history to the public is one more advantage of the project. **(See history).**

**Health and environment:** A regular flow of water through the historic channel would mean less stagnant water to serve as mosquito breeding ground and would serve to flush out of tainted water from street run-off.

**Economic benefit:** Restoration of the historic stream also presents economic development opportunities by making certain undeveloped or underdeveloped properties more attractive for investment, as described further on in this report.

## **Mill River Restoration**



## Planning history

Redevelopment of the corridor of the abandoned stream bed of the Mill River for recreation, for improved circulation in the downtown and as an economic stimulus has been addressed in various past city planning studies, including:

- The **Pleasant/River Redevelopment Project**, May, 1975, prepared by the Northampton Redevelopment Authority as an outgrowth of the **1972 Comprehensive Plan** (which created the office of planning and development and identified the importance of the downtown as “the civic and economic heart of the community”). The focus was on making the Central Business District a better place to live and to revitalize downtown.
- **The Resource Team Report for Northampton, Mass.**, 1981, done by the National Main Street Center of the Trust for Historic Preservation.
- **The City of Northampton, Mass., Downtown Business Area, Commercial Revitalization District (CARD)**, 1980, which addressed revitalization of established commercial districts.
- **The Mayor’s Task Force on Land Use and Development, Final Report**, 1986 which included findings and recommendations on housing, economic development and natural resources and set as a goal “to integrate public and private improvements into the downtown area so as to complement the unique character and appearance of the area....”
- **The Strategic Plan for Resource Conservation**, 1987 by Lozano, White & Associates which addressed the preservation of ecological resources as well as housing.
- **The Mill River Revitalization Plan, Northampton, Massachusetts**, 1999, a project of a landscape planning class in the Department of Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst is a study of the full extent of the Mill River from Williamsburg to Northampton, which includes a focus on the abandoned section through downtown Northampton which the study terms “The Lost River.”
- Several of the goals and objectives listed in **Northampton Vision 20/20, 1999**, a document based on extensive citizen input that outlines future directions for planning and development in the city, relate to the Historic Mill River restoration project. Among these are the goals of “compact development patterns that encourage walking and biking” and encouraging walking and bicycling as part of a “multi-modal transportation system”; business development in the urban core and in areas with access to parking; linking conservation districts; providing recreation, conservation and open space opportunities; reuse of brownfield sites; and preservation of cultural and architectural history.
- **City of Northampton, Open Space and Recreation Plan: 2000-2004** which makes reference to a “downtown greenbelt” as part of larger “Mill River Greenway.”

## Recent redevelopment efforts in the corridor

Redevelopment of properties in the Historic Mill River corridor over the past quarter century have included:

The **Roundhouse** area: The site of a gasification facility operated by the Northampton Gas Light Co. has been redeveloped for various uses: a municipal parking lot; conversion of the former gas works office and storage building into municipal offices (1962); conversion of the gas processing facility (the round building) and connected gas holder into offices (private project completed in 1986); reconstruction and expansion of former gas company garages into a bus station with retail and office space (1984).

The brick industrial building at 53 **Clark Avenue** was converted to residential condominiums in 1988.

The **Maplewood Shops** retail complex at the intersection of Conz Street and Old South Street, were constructed starting in 1979.

**Randolph Place**, a condominium off Pleasant Street that backs onto a section of open channel of the Historic Mill River, was constructed in 1987.

**Millbank II** condominiums off Pleasant Street between Michaelman Avenue and (the former) Pound Avenue, now Millbank Avenue, built in 1987, also overlook an open channel of the Historic Mill River. Valley CDC, a non-profit organization committed to affordable housing and the project owner, developed an additional 10-units in 2004, Millbank III. As part of that project, Valley CDC granted an easement to the city guaranteeing public access to the stream over their property.

There has been a variety of development within the **Service Center special industrial district** over these years. As part of the Mill River redevelopment project, this area was rezoned from Special Industrial to General Business in 2003. As a result, the retail mix in this area started growing in 2004.

In 1989, the city built the 2,100-foot **William P. Nagle Sr. Walkway**. This is a landscaped bituminous path running from Main and Strong streets at the east end of downtown, south alongside the old railroad depot, then west across Pleasant Street and continuing westerly adjacent to an open stretch of the old stream bed from Pleasant Street to the South Street parking lot. This was built in 1989, funded in part by a Massachusetts Urban Self Help Grant.

Several parts of the original walkway plan were never built, including an overlook onto the stream bed and a non-bituminous path that would have followed the open stream bed southeast from the Maplewood Shops to the Millbank condominiums and the Service Center special industrial district. This path was to include two bridges across the stream bed. Neighborhood opposition squelched this part of the plan.

**The railtrail network:** The Nagle Walkway also serves as part of an extensive network of bike paths evolving within the city and the region.

It will eventually connect on both ends to new bike paths now in advanced planning stages.

In the spring of 2002, the city completed the purchase from Massachusetts Electric of easements to two sections of right-of-way of the former New Haven Northampton Railroad, both of which will be reconstructed as bike paths.



One section (which will eventually tie in with the west end of the walkway) runs east-west along an embankment parallel to the Historic Mill River stream bed from the southwest corner of the Roundhouse parking lot beneath the South Street Bridge west past Veterans Field, past the Felt Building, past the Smith College physical plant office and power plant, and on to the south portion of the former Northampton State Hospital property almost to Route 10. At Route 10, the new bikepath will join with the Easthampton bike path now under development..

From the Roundhouse to Smith College, this old rail bed has for years has been used as an informal “unsanctioned” dirt pathway for strollers and bikers.

The second section where the city now has an easement runs from the north end of the Nagle Walkway at Main Street north parallel to King Street to 203 King St. (Wendy’s Hamburgers) where there will be a connection to the existing city bike path.

Design work for the King Street section is due to be completed in the fall of 2005 by Huntley and Associates. Design of the Roundhouse-to-Earle Street section was completed in 2004 by MS Transportation Systems.

## **The steps**

Early planning for the **Historic Mill River Corridor Restoration project** is preceding in phases. This preliminary redevelopment plan was the first step in the project and was designed to create an outline of the entire many-year project. As part of this plan, the Office of Planning and Development, working with grant funded consultants, updated our electronic mapping database of the corridor and created a series of maps to understand, plan, and illustrate the project. In addition, the project included the following:

1. **Historic Environmental Analysis of the historic river corridor (Phase I)** has been performed by Tighe & Bond, Inc., under the state Attorney General’s Municipal Brownfields Grant Program, Spring, 2002.. The realization of the vision begins with the hard and detailed work of assessing sites for possible past contamination, identifying responsible parties where contamination is found, and beginning planning for remediation. The Historic Environmental Analysis is a historical assessment of contamination or possible contamination at various sites within the abandoned section of the river corridor.

The sites is likely to have some environmental contamination, possibly within the historic stream bed itself, including in sedimentation and in fill, and certainly in the Roundhouse parking lot and plaza which was the site of a gasification facility and coal storage areas belonging to the Northampton Gas Light Co. (1856-1951).

The Roundhouse parking lot has already been examined (Metcalf & Eddy, January, 2002) and the findings have been documented in the resulting “Targeted Brownfields Assessment” of the Roundhouse parking lot. Based on several soil samples taken, some contamination of the area was verified. The Bay State Gas Co., the last owner before the city, has accepted responsibility for this contamination.

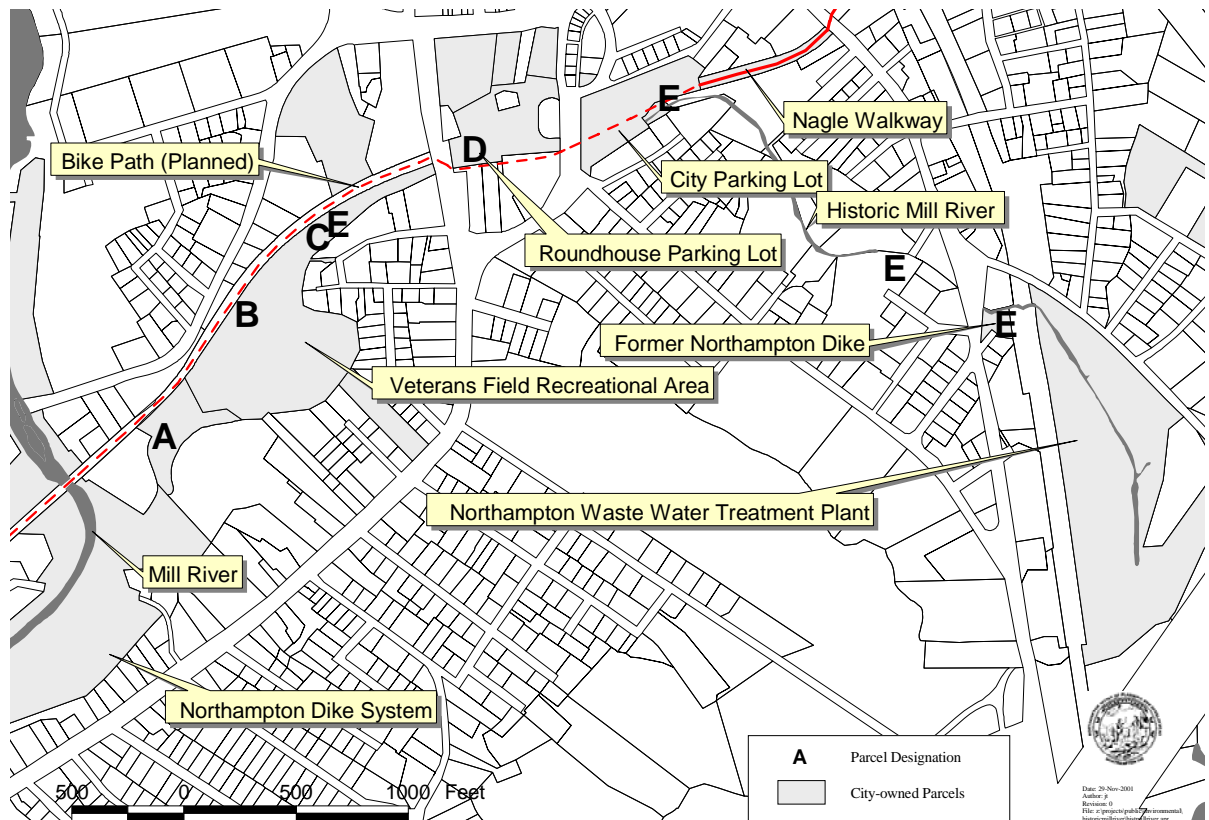
As a result of this work, several points in the stream channel were identified for future assessment, especially adjacent to:

- The Felt Building at 136 West St., formerly home to National Felt Co. and, reportedly before that, of the MacAllum Hosiery Co.;
- Smith College physical plant and power plant;
- Veterans Field;
- Clark Avenue condominiums, a former factory building with a rich history of uses. Its former uses include a wire factory, two print shops, a hat shop, and a printmaker's studio.
- The Service Center special industrial district between Conz and Pleasant Street, site of the former Williams Manufacturing Co., a basket manufacturer.
- On the west edge of the South Street parking lot, the site of a former railroad depot with coal sheds. Where the Northampton Brewery (at 11 Brewster Court) is today is said to have been previously owned by Kimball & Cary fuel dealers, later bought by the Whiting fuel company. Also, just off the west side of the Nagle Walkway on the east edge of the parking lot, the remnants of an area where coal was washed.

2. **Survey by Huntley Associates, spring 2002**, is a survey of existing storm water sewers that feed into the stream bed and of the existing storm drainage mains within the stream bed, plus preliminary topographic mapping in preparation for more detailed planning, site assessment, engineering, and restoration of portions of the river channel.
3. **A environmental analysis (Phase II) of the historic Mill River corridor** as a follow-up to the preliminary analysis, began in the fall of 2002 and was completed in the fall of 2004, with funding from the U.S. EPA Brownfields Pilot Program.
4. **A environmental analysis (Phase I, Phase II, Phase III)** of all contamination from the former Round House Manufactured Gas Plant (coal gasification), funded by Bay State Gas, the responsible party for this contamination. Bay State Gas completed a Phase I in December 2002. Bay State Gas filed a Phase II and Phase III was filed with the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection in December 2004.
5. **A detailed environmental cleanup and institutional control plan** of all contamination from the former Round House Manufactured Gas Plant (Phase IV and any necessary revisions and additions to Phase II and Phase III) is due in December 2006.
6. **Environmental Cleanup and institutional controls**, as needed, of all contamination from the former Round House Manufactured Gas Plant will depend on the findings of the environmental analysis and negotiations between the City and Bay State Gas.

## Environmental Concerns

### Historic Mill River Corridor



- **Feasibility Analysis, Engineering, and Restoration of sections of the historic river bed.**

Rehabilitation of the historic streambed prepares the way for the restoration of stream flow. Flow will be reintroduced into the discontinued stream bed by engineering a controlled opening in the dike at West Street, possibly incorporating radio telemetry so as to insure that the stream is kept confined to the limits of the stream bed and/or pipes where pipes remain.

Some existing pipes will be removed. It is anticipated that two-thirds of the stretch will be open stream when all is said and done, compared to one-third now.

Grants for engineering work and for river restoration will be sought from the Army Corps of Engineers, which has a program for restoration of urban waterways which funds up to 75 percent of costs for projects where the Corps was involved previously in re-channeling of streams

Exactly which pipes would be removed and exactly where the restored stream will be visible cannot be determined until a feasibility study is completed, followed by design work and a full permitting process.

However, it is envisioned that there will be four main stretches of “scenic waterway”: (a) starting at the west end of the abandoned historic stream bed at the Smith College power plant to the westerly side of Veterans Field; (b) from a point east of Veterans Field to Old South Street; (c) from the Maplewood Shops to the Millbank condominiums (where the city will have obtained easements for access to the stream bed), and (d) from Pleasant Street easterly and flowing between Hockanum Road and the city treatment plant to the pumping station at the dike.

While both ( c ) an (d) are now mostly open channel, there are two short sections that currently are buried in underground pipe which are candidates for being opened up: one just east of Millbank condominiums and one immediately east of Pleasant Street (Route 5).

- **Economic opportunity areas**

Restoration of the river just east of Pleasant Street near Hockanum Road would likely be done as part of the development of a “gateway park” at that location, an idea which has been aired at community meetings and has received strong community support, including from the Northampton Rotary Club.

Such a “gateway” would effectively demarcate a new “beginning of the downtown,” in the words of the city planner- expanding the radius of what is considered “downtown,” thereby opening up economic development opportunities.

Specific, currently vacant and/or underutilized sites likely to become more promising for commercial development as a result of the restoration of the river corridor include:

1. Two undeveloped parcels in the Service Center complex: one west across Pleasant Street from the Hockanum-Pleasant Street “gateway” and another on the south bank of the stream bed directly across from the Millbank condominiums.
2. Several properties on Fulton Street.
3. In the Roundhouse complex, there have been proposals put forward in the past to develop the air rights above the parking lot for office and apartments, an idea that becomes more economically compelling with restoration of the adjacent stream.
4. Vacant land on the southerly bank of the stream across from the Round house parking lot.
5. The air rights above the South Street parking lot.

- **Outreach**

Community outreach by the city Office of Planning and Development and its consultants was aimed both at gathering information pertinent to history of the sites and raising public awareness of the Historic Mill River corridor as a community asset.

Seven hundred flyers were distributed to all abutters of the Historic Mill River corridor. Outreach coordinator for the project, Bruce Young, met with numerous business and residential neighbors to discuss the plan. Wayne Feiden, Planning Director, met and spoke with numerous more business and residential abutters.

Eight citizens and Ward 4 City Councilor Rita Bleiman attended a public information meeting on the project held June 12, 2002 in City Hall during which Wayne Feiden, the director of the Office of Planning and Development, introduced the project and received comments and questions.

Feiden said that people who own property in the historic corridor will at some point be asked if they wish their properties to be tested by the city for hazardous materials. The benefit would be their having the testing done for free. The risk would be that any contamination is found would have to be reported.

Generally speaking, based on comments heard at the meeting and some heard in the field, public opinion about the project appears to be mixed at the outset.

People seem to find the “vision” of a restored Historic Mill River interesting, while at the same time some question how practical or affordable it is, especially at a time of economic retraction and shrinking tax revenues.

Property owners in the river corridor are clearly concerned about how their property values might be affected. They are nervous about what the discovery of contamination in the corridor might mean to them in terms of property values or liability.

Flooding remains a concern of abutters to the currently open stream bed, Some of them complain that the stream is even now prone to sudden flooding in times of heavy rain when it receives the outfall from many city storm drains.

On the other hand, people are hopeful that a steady regulated flow through the stream bed will flush out contaminants and eliminate stagnant and smelly pools which breed mosquitoes.

The homeowners at the Clark Street condominium support the project mainly because they prefer a stream and a bike/walking path out their back doors to the construction of a roadway along the old railroad right-of-way such as has been proposed in the past.

Some of the questions and concerns about the project heard at the meeting or otherwise conveyed to the planning department to date coupled with brief responses from the planning department - are as follows:

1. Will this project increase the risk of flooding in the historic channel? No, because the technology exists to regulate the inflow.
2. How was it decided which points in the stream bed should be looked at initially as part of the first phase review of records to determine where contamination is likely?  
-- Land which the city owns or where it has easements was preferred. So were locations considered at highest risk. A third criterion had to do with the identification of possible responsible parties who might eventually help pay for clean-up.  
Because of limited funds, the study is to be done in "bite sized chunks," said Feiden.
3. What happens if contamination is found? -- Abutters will be notified. Any health risks found will be addressed.
4. If contamination is found, will the soil be dug up and removed? Not necessarily. Sometimes an impervious covering, like parking lot blacktop, which prevents leaching of the contaminants, is the best solution.
5. Is street run-off considered hazardous? -- Some of it, such as anti-freeze.
6. Is private property being contaminated from run-off from city streets? -- This is possible, although the city is gradually reducing this hazard as it replaces old storm water pipes and outfalls with new structures that are required to meet stiffer standards for water quality.
7. Shouldn't correcting that problem take priority over restoring the stream? -- Increasing the flow of fresh water in the stream bed will help to flush out the channel.
8. Does the project include any land taking or demolition of buildings? -- That is not in the plan.
9. Given the lack of upkeep by the city evident in such public places as the Nagle Walkway and the "unsanctioned" foot and bike path that runs from South Street to Veterans Field, what assurances are there that a restored riverway will be properly maintained?-- Volunteer efforts with coordination and some practical assistance from the city are the best route to go for maintenance in times of limited resources. The experience of converting old railroad rights of way to public "rail trails" suggests that appreciative users pitch in to help with upkeep.
10. The city currently uses land under the South Street bridge at the east end of the Roundhouse parking lot to dump snow tainted with road salt in wintertime. --True. And this is an environmental issue.
11. Homeowners at the Clark Street condominium are concerned about losing cottonwood and locust trees growing in the river channel that in spring and summer screen their view of the new Smith College parking garage on West Street and the light pollution that comes from there. -- Trees growing in the center of the stream bed are likely to be removed, but those on the sides may be kept.

On January 26, 2005, the City sponsored a follow-up meeting to report on the findings of the City's Phase II environmental assessment for the entire historic Mill River Corridor and Bay State Gas's Phase II environmental assessment for the Round House Manufactured Gas Plant environmental release. Approximately 20 people attended, with

extensive questions focused on the technical findings and the effect of these findings on public health and environmental quality.

## History

There were at one time as many as 55 mills located on the banks of the 10-mile long Mill River proper from its headwaters in **Williamsburg** to where it joins the Connecticut River in Northampton, according to a study called the Mill River Revitalization Plan done by graduate students in regional planning and landscape architecture at UMass.

While the city villages of Leeds, Florence and Bay State are perhaps better known for their riverside industry, there was also significant industrial activity at the river's edge in the city center.

Key industrial sites included:

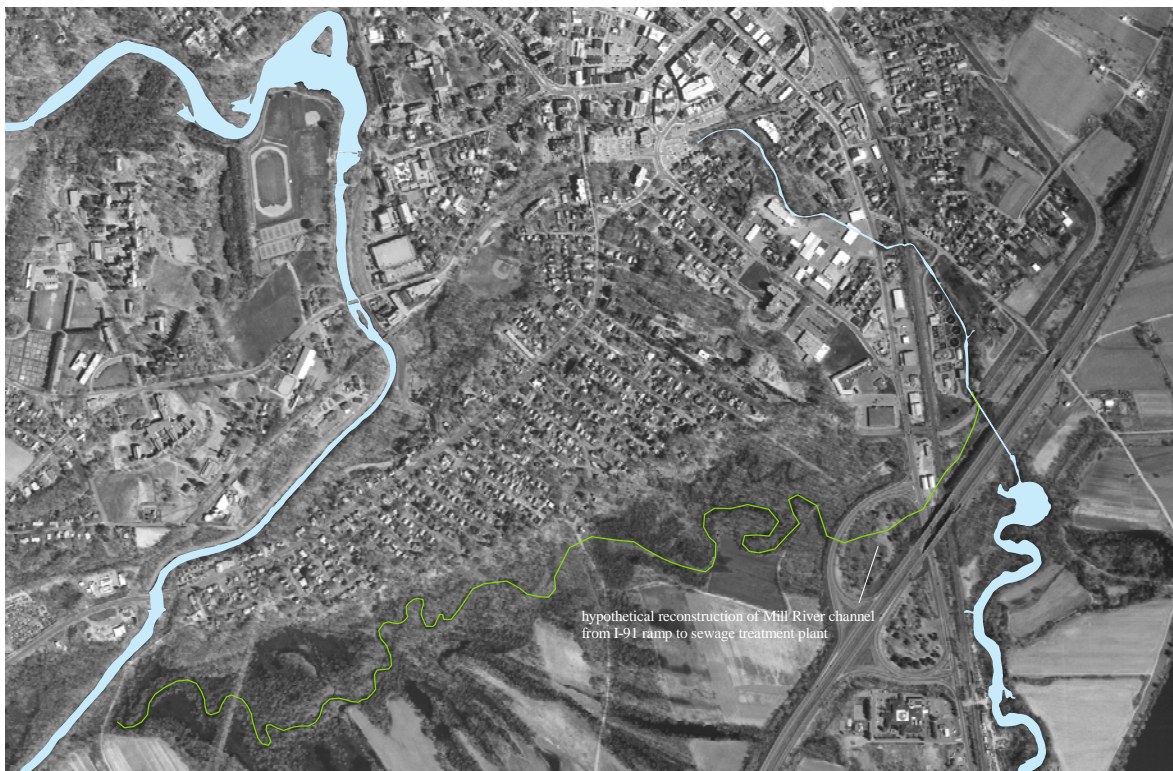
- the Maynard (Shovel and) Hoe Works located where the dam is on the Smith College campus at the outlet of Paradise Pond and near the present Smith College Faculty Club. On the 1895 map, College Avenue turned into what is called "Factory Street" where the road follows the stream south towards West Street.
- the power plant operated by Smith College (labeled the West Street Substation of Massachusetts Electric), located at the West Street bridge at College Avenue, also near a railroad bridge. This is the point where the river used to bend sharply east towards the downtown but in 1940 was diverted by a dike to a new westerly-running channel. The plant used to operate on coal but currently runs on oil and gas. This area was known as Welch's End, where settlers first arrived from Westfield.
- MacAllum Hosiery, where the current Smith College physical plant offices and the Felt Building at 136 West St. are now located. After MacAllum's, it became the National Felt Co. The Felt Building was converted in the 1990's to commercial condominiums..
- The Clark Avenue factory building, converted to condominiums in 1988, formerly contained a variety of enterprises including a wire mill, the Metcalfe Printing Co., a linotype shop which served Metcalfe's (referred to by a neighborhood resident as Mrs. Whittaker's printing shop, where racing forms were printed), Dottie Cohen's hat shop running the full length of the second floor (referred to by this same neighbor), and at the east end, where a four bay garage used to be as old by a series of wide arches, the famed printmaker Leonard Baskin's workshop.
- The Northampton Gas Light Co. (1855-1951), a coal gasification plant that used to provide gas for city streetlights, located on the former rail bed between Old South and New South streets.
- The Northampton and New Haven Railroad depot on what is now Hampton Avenue. The 1895 map shows various coal sheds, a store house and a water works. One longtime neighborhood resident says that where the Brewery now is used to be Cary & Kimball fuel dealers, later sold to Whiting. He points out a place on the south side of the old rail bed (now the Nagle Walkway) where two beams jut above the old stream bed, and says that's where they washed the coal.

Residents remember both the former Meadow Street bridge that spanned the stream in this area and a tunnel under the railroad tracks that connected Meadow Street (Conz Street) and the downtown.

Others remember a railroad turntable here.

- Where the Service Center special industrial district is now between Conz and Pleasant, and located right on the river, was the Williams Manufacturing Co., apparently a basket manufacturer. The Northampton Book says it started in 1862, and in the 1880's was said to be producing 10,000 baskets a day, supposedly the biggest such factory in the world.

### **Mill River: 12,000 years before the current era to 1710**





## Mill River: 1710 to 1940

